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OBSERVER DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

TO THE 41ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

GENEVA, 20 FEBRUARY 1985

Mr. Chairman.

May I begin by expressing my Delegation's great satisfaction at seeing you preside over our deliberations. Your unanimous election to the Chair is indeed apt recognition of your long and distinguished association with the noble work of the Commission. We are confident that under your stewardship this 41st Session will be brought to a successful conclusion. Through you, Sir, I should also like to extend my congratulations to the other distinguished members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman,

It was with some hesitation that my Delegation asked for the floor at this point of our debates. For were it not for the slanderous allegations leveled against my Government by the representatives of three non-governmental organizations while referring to the so-called question of East Timor, my Delegation would have preferred to do what we believe an observer delegation should do, i.e. to listen and to observe attentively and to intervene verbally only sparingly. But those who spoke on behalf of Pax Romana, Pax Christi International and the International League for the rights and liberation of peoples have again seen fit to indulge in a now quite familiar routine of innuendo, insinuation and gross distortion of facts on the situation pertaining to East Timor.

Thus, last Friday and yesterday we again heard the same litany of wild accusations and claims of tortures, detentions, wholesale destruction, massacres and even genocide. For good measure, the old scare-story of famine was also dished up. And in total disregard of all facts to the contrary, the canard is being perpetuated of large-scale troop build-ups and military operations,of the existence of a so-called manual on torture and of international humanitarian organizasions being denied access to East Timor. As to substantiation of these charges, we again heard vague references to "reports" and "testimonies" often from unnamed or completely fictitious

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sources, whose reliability under the best of circumstances should be doubtful to any objective observer.

My Delegation has time and again exposed these frantic efforts at painting the most horrifying picture of conditions in East Timor for what it is : a systematic campaign to malign Indonesia and a desperate attempt to keep alive a non-issue built around a non-existent cause.

Responding to this kind of statements would in fact only lend dignity to them. However, the constant repetition of even the most ridiculous charges, if not rebutted, has the tendency to be in the end perceived as "facts", even by those who originally fabricated them. My Delegation, therefore, feels constrained to impose on the valuable time of this Commission and to speak in order, once again, to set the record straight on at least some of the more outrageous allegations.

Mr. Chairman,

Being apparently unable to come up with any new elements in his presentation, the spokesman of Pax Christi again raised the bogus issue of population discrepancy in East Timor before and after 1975. He claimed a decrease of more than 250,000 persons, thus implying that about one-third of the total population had either perished or disappeared and insinuating that Indonesia should be held responsible. My Delegation has on many occasions before exposed this cynical exercise in statistical juggling and the malicious intent behind it, and is not going to be drawn into discussing it at great length again. Suffice it to say that on the basis of exact figures derived from the Indonesian national census of 1980, which was internationally recognised for its high technical standards and accuracy, and even comparing it to the unverifiable estimated figures compiled during the colonial period, the decrease in the total number of population had been at no time ever near the 100,000 mark, let alone 250,000.

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As to the causes of this discrepancy, it is a sad fact that the tragedy which befell the East Timorese people after 1974 exacted a high toll in human lives, especially during the 1975 civil war and the reign of terror unleashed by the Fretilin as it attempted to impose its will on the population by force of arms. Other factors, however, should also be taken into account, such as the thousands of refugees who fled across the border into West Timor at the height of the civil war, many of whom remained to settle permanently, and the large numbers of East Timorese and Portuguese nationals who over the years have emigrated to other countries or returned to Portugal under the repatriation and family re-union program initiated in cooperation with the ICRC.

I do not know, Mr. Chairman how Pax Christi and Pax Romana arrived at their figures. But it is to be hoped that an end can finally be put to this unsavoury and highly irresponsible numbers game, persistently engaged in by Indonesia's detractors, on a question as serious as human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

The representatives of the three non-governmental organizations have tried to depict East Timor as a famine-stricken land, convulsed in large-scale fighting and misery, and supposedly hermetically closed from the outside world. It requires a truly fertile imagination for those who have never set foot on the island to be able to paint such a picture, which is so totally divorced from reality. In this respect, the representative of the International League has really outdone himself.

East Timor today, thanks to the diligent efforts of its people and the concerted budgetary support of both the Central and Provincial government is a region of rapidly accelerating development, economically, politically, socially as well as culturally. Infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, public housing and communications have been and continue to be the priorities of development. From being a perennial food-deficit area since colonial times, East Timor

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is now reaching self-sufficiency in rice production. More asphalt roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and health-centers, public markets and places of worship have been built in eight years since integration than during the entire 400 years of colonial rule. Through daily scheduled airline connections, improved sea-communications and a nation-wide television and telephone hook-up via Indonesia's own satellite, East Timor has also been able to end its erstwhile isolation.

In the fields of education and public health, giant strides have been made. Furthermore, Indonesia is proud of its record on freedom of worship, religious tolerance and respect for and active promotion of the cultural heritage of each of its diverse ethnic groups, including East Timor. Hence, those with even some knowledge of the Indonesian culture and way of life will readily perceive that allegations of cultural or religious oppression in East Timor are simply too absurd to be entertained.

So if the representative of Pax Christi is looking for drama, I would submit to him that the really dramatic story in East Timor is the transformation that is taking place in that province, the marked improvement in the welfare of its people and the restoration of their dignity and basic human rights in freedom within the Republic of Indonesia. To insinuate, as the representative of Pax Romana did, that these developmental efforts were solely designed to "dominate the situation"; to say, for example, that hospitals are being built "because the central hospital in Dili is full with wounded Indonesian soldiers", only reveals the ignorance and inordinate cynicism of the speaker.

Mr. Chairman,

It is obvious that the progress in East Timor such as I have described could only come about because of the political stability and greatly improved security situation in the province. The remnants

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of ex-Fretilin members still at large no longer pose a security threat as they have been reduced to nothing more than small bands of stragglers, engaged in robberies, banditism and terrorism.

Since the representative of Pax Romana and the International League seem to be fond of quoting from statements and letters purportedly made and written by Monsignor Belo, the Apostolic administrator of East Timor, let me also cite what Monsignor Belo had to say on this score. As reported by the Australian daily "The Age" on 31st July 1984, he spoke of Fretilin's "terrorist policy" inter alia in the following vein (and I quote) :

> "Fretilin had rapidly lost popular support by intimidating or punishing villagers who refused them help and now relied for physical support on relatives and thefts of food .... Fretilin could only grow by raising their children as guerillas".
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> (in direct quotes) : "They make enemies of the people. They have killed villagers and burned houses. This is to provoke and divert the Indonesian troops. It also intimidates people into giving them food and help".

It is of course not surprising that the representatives of Pax Romana and the International League did not quote these particular remarks of Monsignor Belo, as they reveal the pathetic circumstances in which ex-Fretilin elements now find themselves. My Government,therefore, remains hopeful that eventually these last hold-outs will realise the futility of further opposing the overwhelming majority of the East Timorese people in their desire for peace and that they will avail themselves of the general amnesty, proclaimed since 1977 and still in effect today.

As for those apprehended in the course of security operations, due process of law is guaranteed to them. They will be tried and in fact many have been and are being tried on criminal offenses in

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public, civil courts in accordance with Indonesian criminal law and procedures. Legal counsel and the services of sworn interpreters are provided to defendants and the right to appeal to a higher court, i.e. the High Court and subsequently to the Supreme Court is guaranteed by law.

As can be seen, Mr. Chairman, the security situation in East Timor is returning to normalcy. Indeed, it is a far cry from the B-class horror picture which the representative of the International League for the rights and liberation of peoples tried to present in his ranting oration yesterday. As to the fantastic assertions of an enormous military build-up (now supposed to be 40.000 strong if we are to believe Pax Romana's sources), I can only describe it as the product of overzealous agitation, completely devoid of any sense of proportionality.

Mr. Chairman,

In spite of all pertinent information to the contrary, allegations persist that international humanitarian organizations are denied access to East Timor.

My Delegation has time and again pointed out that UNICEF, UNHCR, the ICRC and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have been operating in East Timor for many years now, some since 1979. Together with the Indonesian Red Cross the UNICEF has been engaged in a special project of basic services for children, mothers and their families , comprising an integrated nutrition, primary health care and community development program. About 35 villages, scattered over seven sub-districts have been covered so far and plans are being worked out to further expand the program. UNICEF project staff regularly visit each sub-district to monitor implementation.

Since 1980, the CRS has run the River Basin Agricultural Development Project, near the town of Sare. This project is designated to promote and increase production of food crops through settled farming, multi-cropping etc.

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The ICRC, in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross has been executing various programs in East Timor since 1979, including protection, relief, tracing and mailing, repatriation and family reunion. In the latter part of 1983, it suspended a part of its protection and relief activities due to a temporary relapse in security conditions in the eastern part of the island, after elements of ex-Fretilin perpetrated a massacre against personnel of an Army engineering unit working on a development project in a remote village. On the 8th December, 1983, however, a renewed understanding was reached on the resumption of ICRC's protection activities on the main island, including visits to detention centers outside Dili. In this context, the ICRC has recently visited detention centers in Viqueque, Baucau and Los Palos.

With regard to ICRC's relief/aid activities, programs related to the temporary resettlement center on Atauro island have continued uninterrupted. As to relief assistance on the main island, in December 1983 an agreement was reached between the Indonesian Government and the ICRC whereby such assistance would henceforth be provided by the Indonesian Red Cross and the Provincial Government of East Timor, with the ICRC standing by in case of emergencies. This arrangement was made possible due to the increased capacity of the Indonesian Government and the Indonesian Red Cross to provide the services and funds required and the significant progress achieved in the development of the province. I would like to stress that this was ~~there~~ the agreement reached between Indonesia and the ICRC and thus it was not a case of unilateral suspension by one party ~~on~~ the other. Reports on this matter have often been confusing and sometimes even misleading and Indonesia's critics have wasted no effort to capitalize on it. Moreover, all self-respecting governments will I believe agree with us that external aid, however appreciated in case of need, cannot be imposed on a recipient.

As to allegations of denial of access to East Timor for visitors in general, I would like to point out that over the years scores of

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foreign dignitaries, diplomats, foreign journalists and various parliamentary missions have visited the island and their findings and observations have always been widely publicized. Most recently, officials of the United States Government and a group consisting of the Ambassadors of Canada, New Zealand and the Chargé d'Affaires of the United Kingdom stationed in Jakarta paid a visit to East Timor. They criss-crossed the island by car and helicopter, making pre-arranged as well as surprise visits to a number of places. They met and spoke not only with local government officials but also with ordinary people, including school-children. Their comments on what they saw and heard completely belie the horrifying picture which Indonesia's detractors are wont to portray in their anti-Indonesia campaign.

By way of illustration, let me quote what Mr. Lange, Prime Minister of New Zealand had to say after he received a report on the trip by his Ambassador.
In an interview with New Zealand radio on 13 December 1984, Prime Minister Lange inter alia stated and I quote :

> "The report shows that the Ambassador travelled widely - in fact more widely than he thought he would be able to -, that there was clearly evidence of government security activity but no substantial evidence of resistance to it. And indeed, life seemed to be functioning as well as could be expected. Further, human rights situations are being dealt with by court process - and, in fact, rather than the traditional ... military action against people thought to be insurgents, people are now being put on trial, given effective legal aid and in some cases have been acquitted ....
> The Ambassadors's report shows firmly that there is marked improvement in the quality of life".

It is further alleged, Mr. Chairman, that Indonesia is selective in allowing visits to East Timor and that these visits are usually

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restrictive and carefully pre-arranged. The reports that have come out as a result of visits by inter alia the Australian Parliamentary Mission, various foreign dignitaries and diplomats and many foreign journalists in the past, however, effectively prove the falsity of such claims. But we would like to ask : isn't it the right of any sovereign government to decide whom it wishes to invite within its borders? Even on the level of personal human relations, don't we all have the right to decide whom we want to receive in our own homes? I would ask further : if someone outside your door first starts to hurl abuse and biased, unfounded accusations against you and then demands that he be let in, what would be the normal and appropriate response? On humanitarian issues, Mr. Chairman, My Government has always shown its receptiveness and cooperation towards other Governments and international organizations in so far as they are genuinely concerned with the well-being of the people and not, as some non-governmental organizations clearly are, more interested in obtaining publicity and in pursuing their own political objectives.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my Delegation believes it is high time for those who still cling to myths or misperceptions to accept the fact that decolonization has taken place in East Timor, that its people have determined to choose independence through integration with Indonesia, in conformity with General Assembly Resolutions 1514(XV), 1541(XV) and 2625(XXV). And here I would like to say to my distinguished colleague of Mozambique that far from invading and occupying another independent state, as has happened elsewhere, Indonesia's role in East Timor was precisely one of contributing to that process of decolonization by helping to ensure that the democratically expressed will of the majority not be overruled by the armed terror and unilateral imposition of a ruthless minority, the Fretilin, who posed as revolutionaries but in fact were collaborators of the colonial power. To the distiguisned representative of Nicaragua, I would like to suggest to exercise restraint and to make a serious attempt to be better informed before using such words as "denounce" and "genocide".

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It is high time for those who espouse the lofty principles of democracy based on majority rule to realise that they cannot at the same time continue to support the obsessions of a small, unrepresentative exile group of political adventurers, without doing grave injustice to the real interests of the East Timorese people.

It is high time for those who profess to champion the humanitarian interests and welfare of the East Timorese people as a whole to understand that their concerns are not being served by allowing a malicious, strident anti-Indonesia campaign to be waged by elements obviously intent on political rather than humanitarian objectives.

Indeed it is time, Mr. Chairman, to bring this futile exercise to a definitive end. The attention and effort that are now being squandered on this non-issue could then be re-directed in support of genuine liberation struggles in Southern Africa, the Middle East, Asia and other parts of the world, where peoples are fighting to eradicate the last remaining bastions of colonialism and racism and to free themselves from foreign occupation and domination.

These are the real issues of independence and self-determination on which the urgent and undivided attention of the Commission should be focused and to which my Government and my people remain unswervingly committed.

Thank you.